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THE NEW AVENGERS
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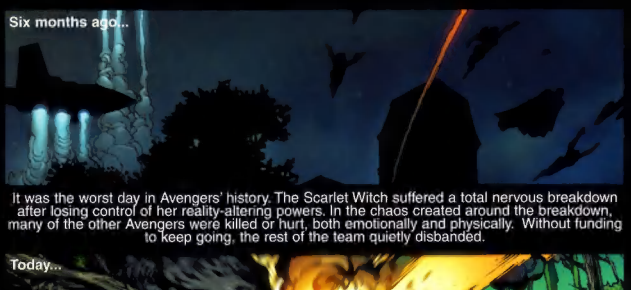
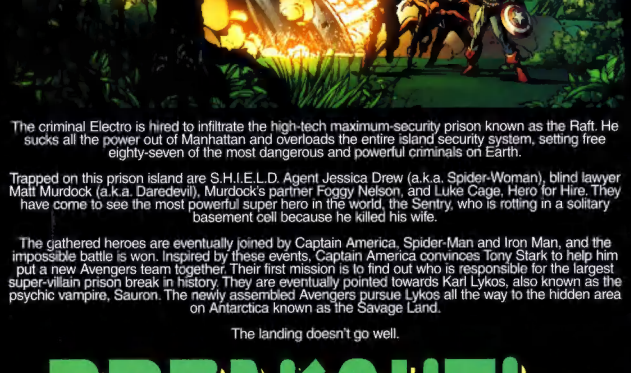


It was the worst day in Avengers' history. The Scarlet Witch suffered a total nervous breakdown after losing control of her reality-altering powers. In the chaos created around the breakdown, many of the other Avengers were killed or hurt, both emotionally and physically. Without funding to keep going, the rest of the team quietly disbanded.



The criminal Electro is hired to infiltrate the high-tech maximum-security prison known as the Raft. He sucks all the power out of Manhattan and overloads the entire island security system, setting free eighty-seven of the most dangerous and powerful criminals on Earth.

Trapped on this prison island are S.H.I.E.L.D. Agent Jessica Drew (a.k.a. Spider-Woman), blind lawyer Matt Murdock (a.k.a. Daredevil), Murdock's partner Foggy Nelson, and Luke Cage, Hero for Hire. They have come to see the most powerful super hero in the world, the Sentry, who is rotting in a solitary basement cell because he killed his wife.

The gathered heroes are eventually joined by Captain America, Spider-Man and Iron Man, and the impossible battle is won. Inspired by these events, Captain America convinces Tony Stark to help him put a new Avengers team together. Their first mission is to find out who is responsible for the largest super-villain prison break in history. They are eventually pointed towards Karl Lykos, also known as the psychic vampire, Sauron. The newly assembled Avengers pursue Lykos all the way to the hidden area on Antarctica known as the Savage Land.

The landing doesn't go well.

BREAKOUT! PART FIVE

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NAAARRRGGHH
HEY!
A QUINJET'S 2 X 2 SYMMETRICALLY-MOUNTED MODIFIED PRATT & WHITNEY J48-P-8A TURBOJET ENGINES DON'T EXACTLY GROW ON TREES, Y'KNOW!
AND I'M NOT MADE OF MONEY LIKE I USED TO-- ARGH!
NAAARRRGGHH
SHOULD WE--CAP? WHAT SHOULD WE DO, BECAUSE--
HE'S GOT IT.

WHERE'D LUKE AND JESSICA RUN TO?
FUMP
YOU GUYS--
--ARE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS ONE.
YA SLIT MY THROAT WITH MY OWN CLAWS!
I COULD GIVE A #@%&! YOU CAME OUT OF NOWHERE!
HE JUMPED ME, CAP!
YA SLIT MY THROAT WITH MY OWN CLAWS!
WOLVERINE, WHAT ARE--?
YOU JUMPED ME AND--
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING--ARGH!
HOLD ON, I'M STILL HEALING. CAN BARELY TALK.
JESSICA, YOU DID THAT TO HIM?
HE CAME UP FROM BEHIND, I DIDN'T MEAN TO--
NOT TOO SHABBY.
S.H.I.E.L.D. TRAINING.
WHY'D YOU JUMP HER, MAN?
I'M BEIN' TRACKED, PUH!
I'M BEIN' FOLLOWED AND I COULDN'T TAKE NO CHANCES.
DIDN'T EXPECT Y'ALL, AND I DIDN'T RECOGNIZE EITHER OF YOUR SCENTS.
THIS PLACE IS SCREWY LIKE THAT.
RRRRR...
WHO'S FOLLOWING YOU?
WHY ARE YOU HERE, LOGAN!?
YOU GUYS KNOW WHO KARL LYKOS IS?
PUH.

SOME GUY CALLS THE X-MANSION YESTERDAY TO TELL WHOEVER'LL LISTEN THAT A COUPLE OF SAVAGE LAND MUTATES CAME TO HIM AND OFFERED HIM SOME CASH TO CRACK LYKOS OUT OF JAIL.
WHO?
GUY NAMED HUDAK.
HUDAK?
I KNOW THAT NAME.
GUY WEARS SOME IDIOT CONTRAPTION--
THE SCORCHER!
YEAH.
OH. HE'S SUCH A LOAD.
WELL, GUY SAID HE'S TRYIN' TO LIVE THE STRAIGHTER AND NARROWER SINCE THAT STUFF WENT DOWN WITH FURY AND OUR LITTLE SECRET WAR.
GUY PANICKED THAT HE WAS GETTIN' SUCKED INTO NASTY AGAIN.
SO HE CALLS US BECAUSE THERE AIN'T NO AVENGERS AND S.H.I.E.L.D. AIN'T EXACTLY EASY TO GET ON THE PHONE.
GUY WAS PANICKED SO HE CALLS THE X-MEN.
WHEN THE RAFT GOT CRACKED INTO YESTERDAY, IT WAS EXACTLY WHAT THAT HUDAK GUY DESCRIBED.
I KNEW IT WAS LYKOS. I KNEW WHERE HE'D GO. AND I KNEW IT WAS TROUBLE.
SO'S I HOPPED IN A BLACKBIRD, AND HERE I AM.
WHERE'D YOU LAND?
CRASHED. BACK THAT WAY.
WHERE'RE THE X-MEN?
TEACHING CLASS. WE GOT KIDS TO LOOK AFTER.
YOU JUST CAME OUT HERE BY YOURSELF?
DONE IT A BUNCH.
TRUTH TOLD I'VE BEEN HAVIN' A BIT OF A ROUGH PATCH LATELY.
TOO MUCH CHANGE AND NOT A LOT TO SHOW FOR IT.
THOUGHT THE AIR MIGHT DO ME GOOD. AND THERE'S SOMETHING FISHY ABOUT HOW THIS ALL WENT DOWN.
HOW SO?
LISTEN--I GOT SOME MUTATES ON MY TAIL FOR A GOOD SIX HOURS NOW.
I WAS KEEPIN' THEM AT ARM'S LENGTH BUT HAPPY PANTS OVER HERE BROKE MY STRIDE.

YOU PUT A KNIFE TO MY THROAT.
IT'S THE JUNGLE, SWEETY. I WASN'T EXPECTING A BUNCH OF--
WHAT THE HELL *ARE* YOU EXACTLY?
UH...ANYONE ELSE'S SPIDER-SENSE JUST GO OFF?
HMM. THESE READINGS CAN'T BE RIGHT.
OK. HERE WE GO.
GO WHERE?
UM...
UH-OH.
YEAH.

THE HELL ARE THEY?
MUTATES. TOLD YA ALREADY. WHOLE PLACE IS SILLY WITH THEM.
MUTATES?
GOOGLE IT WHEN WE GET HOME.
WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?!
SCREW THAT. LET'S BLAST A HOLE THROUGH THE CROWD AND--
MY ARMOR'S DOWN.
YEAH, MY NEW CREEPY ORGANIC WEB SHOOTERS AREN'T WEBBING.
I'M SHOOTING BLANKS, TOO.
UH, GUYS, I'M...
...NOT DOING SO...
MMMMESHLEEPY.
SLEEP NOW, HUMANS.
GIVE IN TO ME. DO NOT FIGHT IT.
NNN...
WHUMP

BATTLE MODE INITIATED.
ATTACK MODE. TARGET: LYKOS, KARL. FILE UNLOCK 54/11.
OH, NO, NO, NO!! NOT MY BABY!
SEE? SEE?? YOU, ARROGANT--
ATTACK MODE. LYKOS, KARL. FILE UNLOCK 54/11 INITIATED.
FSSSSHOOOM
NOOOO!!
FABOOM

AVENGERS ASSEMBLE

Welcome back to AVENGERS ASSEMBLE, our awesome letters page. We've had a deluge of fan mail these last five months, so I can't print everything, but I'm trying. Thanks so much for your support and criticisms of late. You've all been great! So, on with the letters...

Dear NEW AVENGERS Team,

A few months before NEW AVENGERS #1, I didn't consider myself a comic book reader. But after watching the Daredevil movie extra features I found myself interested. I went to the Marvel website and spotted NEW AVENGERS. I bought NEW AVENGERS and I'm just finishing issue #3. I am hooked. The storyline is awesome. The art is great. I am now branching out and picking up other comics.

Thanks to the NEW AVENGERS I now classify myself as a comic book reader.

William Stone
Idaho Falls, Idaho

Yours is probably the best story printed in a comic I've read all year, William. Glad to have you aboard. Hope you liked the OD movie too, not just the extra features.

Avengers Assemble,

Did you put Wolverine on covers purely to boost sales? Because I've read the first few issues...and no Wolverine.. Makes sense that Wolverine's appearance on those covers was just a marketing scheme.

Josh Stafford
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

I hope this issue answered your question, Josh. And our friend John Dokes, head of marketing at Marvel, would be very sad to find out we all think marketing is a kind of scheme. So, shhhh, don't tell him.

Dear NEW AVENGERS,

NEW AVENGERS does appear to be a bit commercial. Marvel's philosophy seems to be "Let's put Spider-Man and/or Wolverine in every comic." If this is your marketing gimmick for 2005, please start cloning these heroes. I am grimly NEW AVENGERS a chance, but I am disturbed that Marvel is relying on two heroes to sell their books instead of relying on ideas.

Howard Van Duyne
(Via e-mail)

I hear you, Howard, and I appreciate you giving NEW AVENGERS a chance. I think you'll find that it stands on the merits of Brian and David's ideas in addition to having popular characters. At least, that's what we're going for! Also, again, "gimmick" probably will hurt Dokes' feelings. Please, go easy on the guy. He thinks what he's doing is making the world a better place. Please, please, please leave him his illusions, it's all he's got left!

NEW AVENGERS Crew,

After reading The NEW AVENGERS #1-3, I have come to one conclusion: THIS ROCKS!!!

Chris Wernke
Vancouver, Canada

Clear, concise, and right on the money, Chris. Thanks.

Dear NEW AVENGERS,

I just have a few questions.

#1 Is there going to be continuity between the NEW AVENGERS and the team members in their own comics? #2. Who is the bad guy that breaks Spidey's arm in issue # 2? I was assuming it was Jigsaw?

Please do not make Spidey a wuss. He can pick up a car and toss it, for crying out loud. I know I'm being pretty protective over the S-Man, but please do him justice. I'll be watching. Please keep up the good work and MAKE MINE MARVEL!!!

James A. Sachs
Indianapolis, IN

Quick answers: you'll definitely see continuity between Spidey's other titles and this series. You're right, that was Jigsaw who broke Spidey's arm. Spidey's strong, but not invulnerable—Jigsaw got good leverage. And about Spider-Man's wuss-level, he's on a team with Captain America, Iron Man, Sentry and Wolverine. He's bound to look a little less intimidating from time to time. If I had to fight one of these guys, I'd either go for Spidey or Spider-Woman. Now that I think about it, I'd definitely go after Spider-Woman, but mainly just because I'm a guy and she's smokin'.

NEW AVENGERS,

Great writing, great art, great characters...great book. Just one suggestion: MORE SENTRY! He is, by far, the coolest Marvel character ever. There is so much potential there. Keep up the good work.

John Beck
(Via e-mail)

Good news, John, issue #7 kicks off a 3-part arc all about the Sentry! And brought to you by Brian Bendis and guest artist Steve (ULTIMATE SECRET) McNiven! Don't miss it!

Hey,

Just wondering if you jerks have brought back Hawkeye and fired that #^@&#*! Bendis yet?

Anonymous

No and no.

Dear Avenging Staff,

After reading NEW AVENGERS #3 I am very pleased. I am an Avengers fan of 20+ years and I'm intrigued by this new direction. The artwork is excellent. I do have one concern though. You alluded (to the possibility) that Spider-Woman may be working for a "questionable" employer. I'd hate to see another teammate betrayal. It worked great with the Scarlet Witch, but to do it again so soon I don't think is tasteful. Besides, Spider-Woman is one of my favorite '80s characters. Let's not tarnish her so soon.

Emmett M. Brown
(Via e-mail)

P.S. Bring the Hulk back to the team!!!

Spider-Woman is one of Brian's favorite characters of all time! Jessica Drew is cool, sexy, powerful, and tenacious. I have a feeling she'll be around for awhile. There are surprises coming your way, but I think you'll like them. As for the Hulk, while he may not show up here for a little while, check out his own book. Fan-favorite HULK writer Peter David is back on the book and joined with talented artists like Lee Weeks and Joe Lee! It's good stuff!

Gentlemen,

I felt compelled, after seeing Mr. Stan Lee write in as a fan, to do so also. There are artists who make the Marvel Universe real. John Buscema was my first exposure to this concept and David Finch belongs right up there with John.

Bendis is Bendis, what can I say? He creates characterizations and story wrapped in a theme with a definite direction that moves forward. Having recently read issue #3, I think I understand that NEW AVENGERS is the continuation of the AVENGERS mythology. Cap and Iron Man (listen to me, 46 years old, talking this way about fictional characters—now that's a powerful mythology that's been built up) are the link between the 'old' and 'new' but the same story of the Avengers continues...albeit after a cataclysmic (that's such a great comic book word) chapter that spins the direction of the franchise in a completely new direction (so, I guess "new" works after all). You've hooked me. Tell Cap I'm in.

Edward David Gil
Calabasas, CA

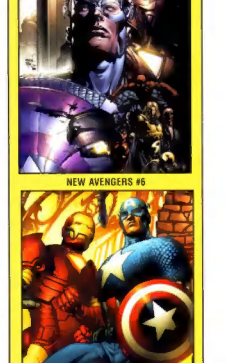
Roll call! Rogers! Stark! Parker! Logan! Drew! Cage! Gil!

Yeah, that's got a nice ring to it, Edward. Cap never doubted you.

That's all I've got room for this issue! Hope you like having Wolverine actually in the book (that means you, Josh) and let us know what you think of Iron Man kicking that dinosaur's butt!

Next letters page: Your thoughts on how similar the NEW AVENGERS are to DC's flagship team. If you've got an opinion on this and you haven't sent them in already, you've got about three days to do so.

--New Andy



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